Winterfest Takes the Chill Off
Weekend offered cooking, ice sculpting, TED conference

By Cynthia K. Buccini

The sixth annual Winterfest weekend drew more than 1,000 alumni, family, and friends back to campus in February. The event brought back some family-friendly traditions, many involving ice (sculpting, skating, and Terrier hockey) and at least one involving heat (a cooking demonstration featuring the foods of Spain).

But the weekend also offered new activities: a quidditch tournament on Nickerson Field, with teams from BU, Tufts, Emerson, and UMass Boston, and a TEDxBU event, which was sponsored by the University’s Howard Thurman Center and organized by students.

TED is a nonprofit organization whose annual conferences bring together innovative thinkers and leaders from around the world. Its TEDx program enables individuals, communities, or groups to organize their own events locally.

The theme of the BU program was “twisted logic,” and the goal was to challenge conventional thinking about a wide range of topics. Speakers included faculty, students, and alumni, such as Hakim Walker (CAS’09), who gave his take on the omnipotence paradox, and Sarah Merriman (CAS’12), whose talk was titled Not Every Woman Is a Feminist, but Every Man Should Be.

The weekend also included lectures led by star faculty. And at the Fitness & Recreation Center, teams of alumni and their friends and families sketched their ideas for ice sculptures, which were then brought to life by professionals with chain saws.

Pam Helling and her husband, Alan Campbell (CAS’92), created a cake, with the number 21 and two candles, in honor of her niece, Amanda Schmitz (SAR’12). Schmitz, a member of the BU swimming and diving team, turned 21 on February 23. “This is our fifth year,” Helling said. “It’s fun. I like doing artistic things.”

Aya Rothwell (COM’07) and her team planned to sculpt Cerberus, the three-headed dog from Greek mythology who guards the gates of hell. Rothwell was participating in the ice-sculpting event for the third year in a row. “It’s fun to get together with friends,” she said. “You argue about what you want to make, then you make it, and then the guy with the chain saw says, ‘What is this?’”

At the tailgate party (from left) Shawn Brandt (ENG’93), Hannah Leopold-Brandt, and Karen Leopold.

Deborah Hansen, chef-owner of Taberna de Haro in Brookline, Mass., whips up a Spanish dish of chicken with garlic, black pepper, and lemon.

BU takes to the pitch in a quidditch tournament on Nickerson Field.

Taking a break between classes at Winterfest are (from left) Paul Mak, a BU Photonics Center laboratory manager, his son, Andrew, daughter, Audrey, and wife, Ellen Mak (MET’99).